NGO's participation in rural development programmes

1999. DR. B. B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the working group has submitted its report on the involvement of voluntary organisations in the implementation of rural development programmes and technology transfer to rural areas;

(b) if so, the recommendations made by the said working group;

(c) whether Government have any proposal to set up a nodal agency at the Central level to track the funding pattern, area of expertise and geographical coverage of Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A list of the recommendations made by the working Group in its report is given in the Statement (See below).

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Statement

List of the recommendations made by the working Group on involvement of voluntary organisations in implementation of rural development programmes and transfer of rural technology in rural areas for formulation of ninth five year plan (1997-2002).

1. Since the Panchayati Raj Institutions work at grass root level and have common objectives, the efforts should be made to evolve a working relationship between the two. The two institutions, though independent of each other, should interact regularly and draw up development programmes in consultation with each other.

2. The PRIs as well as VOs should also be encouraged to take on development projects jointly.

3. At present, there is very little interaction between the various arms of the Govt. that fund VOs. This in some cases has led to duplication of efforts or even, same projects being funded by two organisations. At the same time, there is need for greater interaction between local administration and VAs.

4. To facilitate this process, efforts should be made to ensure better flow of information regarding the existence of VOs in various parts of the country and the work being carried out by them.

5. For this, a nodal agency at the Central level should be entrusted with the task of collecting information about various VOs and funds sanctioned to them for various projects. This information should be made available on NICNET so that all the district administrations in the country would have access to this information.

6. VOs should also be encouraged to take on projects with community support, where financial support from the Govt. may or may not be available.

7. While mutual cooperation between the Govt. agencies and VOs is not only desirable but also essential, Govt. should not seek support of VOs merely for implementation of its own programmes. The Govt. should

also encouraged VOs to draw up location specific programmes, which may or may not be on the lines of programmes drawn up at the national or state level. This flexibility would help VOs to tackle area specific problems and at the same time, take up projects best suited to their own endowments

8. At present VOs are unevenly spread over the country, while some geographical areas have a long tradition of voluntary action, this may not be true of many other parts of the country While it is not desirable to create a VO in such areas artificially, efforts should be made to create awareness about the importance of self-help and voluntary movement insuch areas which in turn could lead to evolution of VAs in such areas over a period of time. This could be done by projecting success stories of the voluntary movement through mass media.

9. CAPART's scheme of Young Professionals which encourages professionally qualified persons to first work in the development sector and later set up their own NGOs should be expanded for the desired results.

10. In this context, setting up of semi-autonomous bodies like Lok Jumbish, SWACH, Shiksha Karmi Programmes, etc. where Govt. itself tries to incorporate values of participatory action, need to be encouraged at district, block and village levels.

11. There is a fair need for development and dissemination of rural technology and efforts have to be made to ensure dissemination of low costs easy to repair, and sustanable technology manufactured using locally available resources in rural areas. The Working Group recommended establishmeent of at least one resource centre for rural technology in every district. This could be done jointly in areas, where Govt. is setting up rural ITIs or community polytechnics.

12. Innovative technologies, adaptive research and technology transfer should be encouraged at all levels. There is need for involving universities and CSIR laboratories and other research institutions in this task.

13. In the field of rural technology, the Working Group identified the following areas for focussed attention:—

1. Improvement in existing agricultural practices.

2. Value-addition to bio-resources and improved watershed management.

3. Improved rural energy generation & delivery.

4. Low cost housing, roads & other construction.

5. Data collection and data-based analysis & Planning including computerisation.

6. Local processing of farm, forest and mineral products, etc.

14. The process of decentralisation of CAPART needs to be expedited to ensure that there is one Regional Centre in every State. The Regional Centre also needs to be strengthened in terms of manpower and professional expertise.

(a) CAPART's financial allocations from the Government are all tied to schemes and

to the Government's guidelines. This does not provide for the kind of flexibility that VOs need and which has been recommended in the draft report. There should therefore, be an untied allocation to be utilised for an entire spectrum of activities which can be listed. The already established Mechanism of National Standing Committees and Regional Committees would be able to utilise this unfixed allocation in a purposeful and transparent manner.

(b) CAPART should be permitted to modify Government guidelines of various schemes to suit the requirements of VOs provided they do not militate against the basic spirit and objectives of the schemes/programmes. This can be done in consultation with Government.

(c) Presently, CAPART receives funds only from Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment. A number of other Ministries/Departments also provide financial assistance to VOs for various programmes and schemes, but this is done directly. If there is to be one or more effective nodal agencies dealing with VOs in a co-ordinated and cohesive manner as recommended in the report and by the Krishnaswamy Committee, schemes of other Departments/Ministries should also either be routed through CAPART or similar organisations set up which could deal with related activities. This would require a high level policy decision if narrow departmental attitudes are to be overcome.

15. CAPART and some institutions, interacting with VO should organise raining programmes for he benefit of VO and beneficiaries, especially in areas which require professional help like watershed development, microplanning, accounting practices, disaster preparedness, production planning, etc. These programmes needs to be framed to meet local needs and thus should be planned at the local levels rather than on a national level.

16. For this purpose, training institutions and VOs with such professional expertise needs to be identified and supported.

17. Each funding agency should also make provisions for providing support to personnel of VO to attend short-term training courses.

18. The recommendations of P. B. Krishnaswamy Committee for timely processing of project proposals, release of funds, etc. should be implemented.

19. Since most of the VOs are small and a large number of them are located in remote areas, many of them do not have skilled manpower, to keep accounts and records. In view of this, there is need to encourage project monitoring rather than accounts monitoring.

20. Complicated procedures for funding of NGOs often lead to avoidable delays in processing of project proposals. The funding departments/Ministries/agencies should set a time limit for processing of project proposals. The process of funding needs to be streamlined to ensure espeedy disposal of project proposals.